

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 AGR-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 INR-07

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OMB-01 IO-13 L-03 USIA-06 AID-05 NSC-05 SS-15 CEA-01

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8425

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DEPT. PASS GEPLACEA COUNTRIES

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, ETRD, PN

SUBJECT: GEPLACEA SUGAR MEETING IN PANAMA

REF: PANAMA 4720

1. THE FIFTH MEETING OF THE GROUP OF LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN SUGAR EXPORTING COUNTRIES (GEPLACEA) ENDED ON JULY 9 WITHOUT COMPLETING THE FINAL DOCUMENT SUMMARIZING THE AGREEMENTS CONCLUDED DURING THE WEEK'S DISCUSSIONS. GEPLACEA'S EXECUTIVE SECRETARY JORGE BRIOSO STATED THAT THE DELAY WAS "NOT DUE TO DIFFERENCES OF OPINION, BUT TO THE LARGE NUMBER OF SUBJECTS TO BE INCLUDED IN THE DOCUMENT". DURING THE POST-SESSION PRESS CONFERENCE, COMMERCE MINISTER JULIO SOSA, HEAD OF PANAMA'S DELEGATION AT THE MEETING, SAID THAT GEPLACEA HAD AGREED TO ESTABLISH A WORKING GROUP TO ANALYZE ALL DOCUMENTS CONCERNING THE NEGOTIATIONS ON A NEW INTERNATIONAL SUGAR AGREEMENT, WHICH ARE TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR APRIL IN GENEVA. THE NEXT MEETING OF THE GROUP WILL BE HELD IN HAVANA THE FIRST

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PART OF MARCH. THIS SESSION WILL FOCUS ON DRAFTING A

FORMAL GEPLACEA POSITION ON AN INTERNATIONAL SUGAR AGREEMENT.

2. ANY PROGRESS MADE IN ATTEMPTING TO REACH AGREEMENT ON OPERATIONALIZING THE GENERAL STATUTES DRAFTED AT THE RECENT CALI MEETING WILL NOT BE APPARENT UNTIL A FINAL DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE. MINISTER SOSA INDICATED THAT NO MINIMUM PRICE FOR SUGAR WAS DECIDED UPON DURING THE SESSION AND THAT THE HAVANA MEETING WILL "FIX THE LIMITS OF A REASONABLE PRICE FOR EXPORTERS". FURTHER PROGRESS WAS MADE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF COOPERATIVE TECHNOLOGY, WITH BARBADOS OFFERING TO SHARE ITS SUGAR RESEARCH CENTER WITH OTHER SUGAR-PRODUCING COUNTRIES IN THE REGION.

3. THE GENERAL IMPRESSION HERE IS THAT THE CURRENT SESSION OF GEPLACEA DEVELOPED PHILOSOPHICALLY AS A SYMPATHETIC FOLLOW-ON TO THE RECENTLY-COMPLETED AMPHYCTIONIC CONFERENCE. THEREFORE, FINAL CONSIDERATION OF THE WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS ON PRICING AND MARKETING POLICY, WITH ITS INHERENT PYROTECHNIC POTENTIAL, WAS POSTPONED UNTIL THE MARCH MEETING IN HAVANA. THIS ALLOWED THE PARTICIPANTS TO DWELL ON THE MORE MUNDANE PROPOSALS CONCERNING THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION ABOUT PRODUCTION, TECHNOLOGY, AND THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF SUGAR. MEANWHILE, THE WORKING GROUPS WILL CONTINUE REFINING THEIR PROPOSALS ON MARKETING AND PRICING STRATEGIES. MEMBERS FAVORING PRICE MAINTENANCE AND COORDINATED MARKETING MECHANISMS, LED BY CUBA AND MEXICO, WILL LIKELY PUSH HARD FOR THE ADOPTION OF THESE STRATEGIES AT THE HAVANA MEETINGS, WHERE THEIR CAMPAIGN WILL BE ABETTED BY THE AVAILABILITY OF CUBA'S COMPETENT SUGAR TECHNOCRATS AS LOBBYISTS AND BY THE IMPENDING DEADLINE FOR UNIFIED ACTION POSED BY THE GENEVA MEETING IN APRIL.

4. EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TO OBTAIN COPIES OF THE DELEGATE LIST AND FINAL MEETING REPORT (WHEN AVAILABLE).
JORDEN

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